

## **Community Preservation Act Committee**

Date: January 31, 2024

Time: 7:02pm – 8:35pm

Location: Conducted remotely.

---

### **Final Draft Minutes**

Remote Participation: Clarissa Rowe  
Jo Anne Preston  
Susan Doctrow  
David Swanson  
Kin Lau  
JoAnn Robinson  
Brian McBride  
Alexander Franzosa

Also Attending Remotely: Christine  
Bongiorno –  
Deputy Town  
Manager of  
Operations  
  
Deanna  
Stacchi  
-Minutes

### **Introductions**

CPAC Chair, Clarissa Rowe, welcomed members and guests at 7:02pm. Ms. Rowe reminded the CPAC members that the budget is currently over by \$1M. Ms. Bongiorno advised attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

### **FY25 Applicant Presentations**

#### **a. Menotomy Rocks Park Playground and Picnic Area - \$400,000**

Joe Connelly stated that the 20-year old playground was removed last summer due to safety issues and non-compliances discovered during playground inspections. The picnic area was removed 2 years ago for safety and accessibility concerns. Landscape architect Copley-Wolfe has been hired with the help of ARPA funds to design a new playground/picnic area. The project has the support of the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and has received a lot of positive community feedback.

Mr. Connelly noted that educational signage will be installed to educate parkgoers about the history of the park and the park's wildlife. The design will include ADA upgrades, gathering spaces, naturalistic play and age-appropriate play elements. The second public input session will be held on February 8, 2023. Two conceptual designs will be presented for discussion and feedback.

The Park and Recreation Commission is seeking guidance and recommendations from ConCom regarding a newly identified wetland area adjacent to the playground/picnic area. The final concept design will require ConCom approval to ensure that the project does not infringe on the 25-foot buffer zone.

\$400,000 is requested for site preparation and construction which is slated to begin September 2024 and is anticipated to be completed by April 2025.

Ms. Preston – Inquired if both conceptual designs have the same cost estimate. Mr. Connelly stated that they are because the plans were designed to the budget. She also asked how PRC prioritized projects. Mr. Connelly explained that the multi-year capital plan is reviewed annually to determine if there are new safety concerns that will need to take priority. PRC also tries to rotate the types of projects that are done each year. Example: Playground renovation one year, field project the following year, then a court improvement project the next year.

Mr. McBride – Asked about including a path from the playground to Jason Street in the plans. Mr. Connelly noted that the path was added 10-12 years ago but will require minor regrading and maintenance. Mr. McBride also inquired about other funding. Mr. Connelly stated that ARPA funding has been used for the school playgrounds and Robbins Farm Park so there are no ARPA funds left. Capital funding is used for projects not eligible for CPA.

Mr. Lau – Suggested breaking the project into two years. Mr. Connelly stated that construction must be done in one phase to prevent increased materials costs and added costs to remobilize.

Member of the Public -

Lindsey Gael – Extended her support and requested that CPA fund the project.

b. Crosby Park Court – \$1,500,000

Mr. Connelly provided data collected from the athletic courts needs assessment conducted last year. The assessment examined current conditions and reviewed community input collected from multiple surveys and public meetings. Community feedback shows an increased need for designated pickleball courts. Currently pickleball lines are overlaid on tennis and basketball courts which creates demand for the same courts by multiple users/user groups. Designated courts allow for more play for each sport/activity. The courts' assessment determined that the present conditions of Crosby were the worst in town and can no longer be repaired with overlays. It was also noted that the picnic tables and benches are not ADA accessible. The

courts are highly used by the public, for lessons and serves as the home court for Arlington Catholic High School Tennis.

Mr. Connelly presented a conceptual plan that includes 5 tennis and 4 pickleball courts, stressing that it is not an actual plan and was created for budget planning purposes only. He also noted that the project does not include a field renovation. Lesley Ellis has been contacted and has no concerns with the project.

Mr. McBride – Asked if Arlington Catholic court use was a source of revenue and if there were fees for court reservations. Mr. Connelly explained how the reservation app Play Local worked and how fees were collected from schools, user groups and non-residents. Arlington residents playing pick-up games are not charged a fee.

Members of the Public:

Cutler Cleveland – Supports the tennis courts but does not support installing pickleball courts noting the loss of the blacktop, green space and trees. Increased options will lead to more use, traffic and parking problems. Mr. Connelly explained that the presentation is conceptual only and is not the design plan. Input from the public will be incorporated into the actual design.

James Symonds – Echoed Mr. Cleveland's concerns, adding that heavy traffic is already a concern due to Saturday and Sunday soccer practice/games.

Jess Fallon – Does not support adding pickleball courts. The shady play area is widely used by siblings of soccer players during practices/games. Mr. Connelly explained that the presentation is conceptual only and is not the design plan. Input from the public will be incorporated into the actual design.

Ashley Pinciario – Shared experiences with cars parked in front of fire hydrants and abutter's driveways. The park is consistently used by four local schools and the neighborhood families. The neighborhood families used the park a lot during Covid, especially the blacktop for games like hopscotch. Increased traffic on the narrow, quiet one-way street is a huge concern because a child was hit by a car on the street this year. Mr. Connelly explained that the presentation is conceptual only and is not the design plan. Input from the public will be incorporated into the actual design. He also noted that there are several safety hazards in the blacktop area including exposed root systems and damage to the wall and concrete.

Joe Pinciario – Reiterated the previous speakers' concerns around traffic and parking. He feels the data is flawed because 26% of the 500 respondents did not answer where they lived prompting the question that many may not even be Arlington residents. He shared that the neighbors do not feel that their voices are being heard because they did not know about the surveys or meetings. Mr. Connelly explained that the survey and meetings were shared through a town email blast and were not limited to specific residents, neighborhoods or groups. Mr. Connelly explained that the presentation is conceptual only and is not the design plan. Input from the public will be incorporated into the actual design. He shared again that the

conditions were deemed hazardous and in extreme disrepair. Ms. Rowe advised the public attendees to contact their neighbors and work together.

John Aslanian – Requested access to the project documents for the proposals and minutes from meetings over the last year. Ms. Rowe stated that she will email Mr. Aslanian. Mr. Aslanian noted that pickleball was not mentioned in the 2022 -2029 Open Space plan. Requested that indoor pickleball locations be considered due to the increased noise that additional courts, especially pickleball, would cause.

c. Minuteman Bikeway Redesign - \$85,200

John Alessi, Senior Transportation Planner, stated that funding will be used to hire a land survey consultant, engage the public and create a conceptual design plan. Project features include – a splitter island and traffic bollard to slow down traffic and prevent vehicles from entering the bikeway, removal of damaged fencing and invasive species and expanding the width of the trail to add resting stops and access to the adjacent fields and playgrounds. External grant funding is being sought to cover the final design phase. The working group is in contact with the MBTA.

Ms. Preston – Asked about external funding for the consultant fees. Expressed concerns about tree removal. Mr. Alessi is looking at Mass Trails funding availability but knows from experience that it is not likely. He stated that only invasive species are being removed and that there are no plans to remove any trees.

Mr. Lau – Questioned if the ask was for design only and if the planning department was funding the public meetings. Mr. Alessi explained that \$85,200 would include public engagement and review of a conceptual design. He advised that a conceptual design is needed before engaging the MBTA so this proposal cannot include MBTA engagement.

Ms. Rowe – Suggested having the MBTA sign-off on the project before moving forward with final design.

d. Public Land Management Plan - \$25,000

Mr. Alessi presented the proposal on behalf of David Morgan. He advised that if there were any questions about the project that he would consult Mr. Morgan and provide written responses. He explained that funding is needed to hire a consultant to assess and conduct research needed to amend the existing Public Land Management Plan. The goal of amending the plan is to improve management of open spaces, align with other town plans, access the needs of the community, increase public use and enjoyment and provide guidance to DPW.

Ms. Preston – Recommended that all consulting work be done to complement the work Mr. Morgan has already done. Mr. Alessi stated that certain areas of the original PLMP need more in-depth research but will use the same methodology.

Mr. McBride – Supports the project and the holistic approach.

Ms. Robinson – Noted that many town Commissions have jurisdiction over open spaces. Documentation is needed. She wants to work together to ensure that Historical Commission properties are included in the proposal. Mr. Alessi will relay Ms. Robinson's concerns and her request to Mr. Morgan.

e. McClennan Detention Basin - \$40,000

Mr. Alessi stated that a comprehensive assessment is needed to restore the basin to full capacity. The assessment will determine existing conditions, sedimentation rates and cost estimates. The project is critical to flood protection, reducing run-off damage and habitat conservation. It will also improve water quality, preserve biodiversity, create a healthy public gathering space and increase recreational value.

Ms. Rowe – Requested a priority list for the three proposals.

#### **New Business – N/A**

Ms. Rowe – Bonding and projects will be discussed at the next meeting, February 7. Bonding information will be emailed to Committee members. She stated that Ms. Biongiorno and Mr. Feeney are calculating how much CPA funding is being returned and will have the amount for the next meeting.

Ms. Doctrow - Suggested voting first and discussing bonding second.

Mr. Lau – Requested audit details showing how last year's funding was spent.

Mr. McBride – Shared that there have been no consultant recommendations for Hills Hill at this time. Ms. Rowe stated that the item will need to be added to the agenda.

Ms. Rowe concluded the meeting at 8:35pm.